

Am. Poetry

# RUTH

AND OTHER POEMS

BY  
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# RUTH,

## AND OTHER POEMS

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### "RUTH."

#### I

##### 1.

A man may dwell in his halls of state,  
And because he is rich may deem he is great.  
A man may live in the lowliest cell,  
And be nobler far than words can tell.

##### 2.

With lofty look may a lord disdain,  
The men of the world who are coarse and  
plain.

But one who resides in a realm remote,  
Knows not what the sighs of a world denote.

##### 3.

Yea, little he learns who lives alone,  
And commands his slaves from a golden  
throne;

And tho' money be much, still is happiness  
more,  
And but known in the house with an open  
door.

4.

Tho' a lord may think that a country maid,  
In the simplest clothes of her class arrayed,  
Was built but to worship his form divine,  
And make of his mansion a priceless shrine,—

5.

Will most certainly find with passing years,  
That life is more than at first appears;  
That a mansion often contains a mole,  
And a humble cottage a noble soul.

6.

And tho' money controls of things a host,  
What's easily won is more easily lost;  
And the lover who woos without a tear,  
May win, but will lose within a year.

7.

So it ever will be wherever we rove,  
When the hour is late we awake to love;  
And the soul will sigh for a vanished hour,  
And the heart will break o'er a perished flower.

RUTH.

5

II

1.

I played with Ruth in my infant years;  
We roved as children the shelt'ring woods;  
From earliest Spring when emerald buds,  
Or the first snowdrop of the copse appears.

2.

When wild March winds blew over the lea,  
And white clouds sailed in a dappled sky,  
We gambolled together, Ruth and I,  
While the daffodils danced right merrily.

3.

We gathered the April violet,  
Of sweet perfume and with raindrops wet,  
Far in the leaf-strewn hollows set.  
Were it well to remember or to forget?

4.

Thro' odorous orchards in sunny May,  
Where rose or white is each tufted spray,  
And fleecy lambs round the tree-trunks play,  
We strayed together the livelong day.

5.

Came June with its pageant of roses red,  
Rich changeless festival days of sun,  
That passed in procession one by one,  
While the lark soared jubilant far overhead.

6.

But the glory of Summer waned at last,  
As the golden days of childhood will;  
Came winds of Autumn piping shrill,  
And wintry snow on the northern blast.

7.

So we played no more by field or stream,  
While the snow o'er all the land lay white.  
Gone were those days with the swallows  
flight,  
And Ruth became but a distant dream.

## III

1.

Long years and wild flew over my head,  
And college days like a vision fled;  
Till I left at last the land of my birth  
To visit the beautiful cities of earth.

2.

In Paris I found what should suffice  
To surfeit a nature steeped in vice.  
There I studied art and nature too,  
With boon companions a merry crew.

3.

As the heart grows weary of endless pain,  
So the soul will tire of a life that's vain;

## RUTH.

7

And the sybarite will pause and sigh,  
For the simpler joys of a day gone by.

4.

So I left the city of gaiety,  
And crossed the Alps to Italy;  
And came at length to the ancient home  
Of the Cæsars, and dwelt in desolate Rome.

5.

But tho' art was true, the stones were cold  
That spake of a civilisation old;  
And tho' much may be found in a mouldy  
tomb,  
The relics but filled my soul with gloom.

6.

So I sailed to the East and the languorous  
isles,  
Where the sun ever shines and the sea ever  
smiles;  
And these gave me a space my happier youth,  
But dreams, sad dreams of my raven Ruth.

7.

When I saw at dawn a dusky queen,  
Stand 'neath her native palm serene,  
'Twould take me back how many a mile,  
And tho' sad at heart my lips would smile.



8.

There I lived, but cannot tell how long,  
And tho' weary of soul was fed with song;  
Yet the tireless sun in a tireless sky  
Could not banish the thoughts of a day  
gone by.

9.

So I sailed from the islands of languorous glee,  
To the coast of Ind o'er the burning sea;  
And forgot, in that glorious glamorous clime,  
That life must pass with passing Time.

10.

Till a letter arrived from forgotten West,  
That my father had died and was laid to rest;  
And I felt, I will own, a transient pain,  
But knew I was lord of a vast domain.

1.

Fan, wind of the Eastern Sea,  
Blow from the happy isles;  
Waft me far to the land of the free  
Over an ocean of smiles.  
O bear me into the distant West,  
And the heart of the maid my heart loves  
best.

2.

Strain, sail at the masthead strain,  
White in the gleaming sun;

## RUTH.

9

Urge our ship o'er the azure main  
Till the joyous race be run.  
'Neath sun and stars to the distant West,  
And the heart of the maid my heart loves  
best.

11.

So here once more I drew free breath,  
Tho' I dwelt in the halls made vacant by  
death;  
For if one die, there is one to succeed,  
And a dead man's loss was a live man's need.

### IV

1.

Ruth is the gamekeeper's daughter,  
Ruth is the name I adore;  
She lives by the lake's rippling water,  
Close by the reed-fring'd shore.

2.

The cottage is rustic and pretty,  
The garden is laden with flowers;  
And here from the noise of the city,  
I could sit and dream for hours.

3.

But Ruth never greets her lover  
Mid roses and mignonette;

Lest someone should chance to discover  
Where her sweet heart is set.

## V

## 1.

I met my love when the sun was low,  
And a soft wind blew from the crimson west;  
A pale star shone in the afterglow  
Ere the moon arose from her daily rest.  
"O love"—I breathed, "'tis well to be  
In the calm twilight alone with thee."

## 2.

I met my love in the scented dawn,  
At the first faint flush of the rising day;  
Shadows slept on each velvet lawn,  
And mists o'er the meadow valleys lay.  
"O love,"—she sighed, "that I might be,  
For ever and ever alone with thee."

## VI

## 1.

Ruth bringeth balm to my spirit,  
I walk in a world of delight;  
I dwell in high heaven, or near it,  
When I gaze in the eyes of my darling, my  
prize,  
That shine like twin stars on a calm summer  
night.

## 2.

Ruth is much more than a temptress,  
An Eve in a vale of delight;  
Of love's sweet dominion the empress,  
She guardeth my soul while the cold waves  
roll,  
And reigneth alone in my heart of her right.

## 3.

Ruth is not less of an angel,  
Because I am less of a man;  
Tho' the cruel world may estrange, all  
The friends of my youth, 'twould be nothing  
to Ruth,  
Who has loved whole-souled since her being  
began.

## 4.

Ruth is a vision of beauty,  
Foreshadowing God's perfect plan;  
And I find it no unpleasant duty,  
To stroll and to walk at her side, and to talk  
Of all that brings joy on this earth unto man.

## VII

## 1.

Fly happy bird to your nest,  
Perched 'neath the eaves of her home;  
And tell her I come at the hour she loves best,

In the cool of the dawn when the world is at  
rest,  
Go tell her I come, yes I come.

## 2.

Obey happy bird my behest,  
Carry my love to her home;  
And tell her I rise from my night of unrest,  
And come at the hour her sweet nature has  
blest,  
Go tell her I come, yes I come.

## VIII

## 1.

I arise from sweet dreams of the night,  
Ere the crescent moon wanes from above;  
For a vision of joy and delight  
Has tempted my footsteps to rove;  
To rove and to wait ere the dawn at her gate,  
Mid the woodbine's perfume that I love.

## 2.

Is it love, is it passion O heart,  
Or fate that hath guided my feet?  
Will the night and its magic depart,  
And leave me bitter or sweet?  
But O for the grace I might win from her face,  
And her voice where all music doth meet.

## 3.

O Ruth shall I wait, till the dawn,  
For a wave of your lily-white hand?  
Mid the flowers that embroider your lawn,  
To know what you will and command?  
To know and to feel that forgiveness is real.  
And a soul can a soul understand!

## IX

## 1.

Awake from the night of your slumbers,  
The dawn is yet cool by the lake;  
And the mavis, with magical numbers,  
Her ease in green hollows doth take.  
While a tear in the heart of the lily is borne,  
And the woodland is fresh with the scent of  
the morn.

## 2.

The fair lotus lowly is weeping,  
The nightingale ceaseth from song;  
Arise, O my love, from your sleeping,  
I wait in the garden how long!  
Ere the pale crescent queen waneth low in  
the west,  
Arise, O my love, from the night of your rest.

## X

## 1.

I strolled thro' the woodland that borders the  
lake,  
While the flowers were asleep and the birds  
were awake;  
The lily lay white on her watery bed,  
And the skylark was carolling far overhead.

## 2.

It was but a word that was spoken last night,  
Yet I know Ruth will come at the dawning of  
light;  
While the wavelets scarce ripple the sand in  
the bay,  
I know Ruth will come at the breaking of day.

## 3.

Yet the night has long wept thro' its sorrow  
of rains,  
And the bird of the morn to his loved one  
complains;  
And I wait, and I wait, in the wood by the  
lake,  
For Ruth must be coming,—the flowers are  
awake.

## 4.

Be still, O my heart, with thy shadow of fear,  
From her cup the frail lily has shed her last  
tear;

Beat calmly in strength, lest your passion be  
known,

Tho' you wait, wait, wait in the woodland,  
alone.

## XI

## 1.

Was I dreaming awhile, as I leaned on the  
stile

That leads to the meadow below the mill?  
Did her footsteps pass o'er the list'ning grass,

Or the harebells tremble on yonder hill?  
And was it a song of life or a dream,  
Or only the garrulous voice of the stream?

## 2.

Was I musing on life with Ruth for a wife,  
Yea, her sweet, sweet self as my winsome  
bride?

When the touch of her dress and a light caress  
Told me Ruth was close at my side!

And O why did I gaze at the distant scene,  
As if Ruth was not and had never been?



## XII

## 1.

I know a lone wood by the river,  
I love a lone path in that wood;  
Where Ruth would come often and ever,  
Where oft at her side I have stood.  
And the ruby twilight, that preceded the night,  
Would seem to be one with our mood.

## 2.

But now, I love not the river;  
I love not the wood as before;  
For Ruth now will come not forever,  
Will gladden my heart nevermore.  
And the twilight may fall and the nightingale  
call,  
But the sedge only sighs by the shore.

## XIII

But a word, as the wind, lightly spoken,  
More lightly breathed than a sigh;  
May leave two hearts nigh broken,  
More surely than vilest lie;  
While to one remains but the token,  
And to one a tearless eye.

## XIV

O Ruth with the raven hair,  
And eyes like deep pools of fire;  
Could I touch you with my despair,  
Or thrill you with my desire,  
Then the world would seem to me more than  
dream,  
And life than a vision more fair.

## XV

## 1.

Oho for the tavern, I'll drink to her folly,  
My berry-brown Ruth has a will of her  
own;  
And has yielded to pride or to sweet melan-  
choly,  
That I, her rich lover, may sue at her throne.

## 2.

Bring landlord the tankard, with foaming ale  
flowing,  
Why weep for one maiden when many are  
by?  
Shall a wench teach a noble the way of his  
going,  
Or bring him to book with a tear in her eye?

3.

Drink comrades, drink deeply, drown prudence and reason,  
With merriness banish the clouds of despair;  
Now each to his mistress may quaff without treason,  
And each his true maiden may pledge without care.

4.

So here's to the tavern, to madness and folly,  
If Ruth have a will let her keep it her own;  
For what should men know of a sweet melancholy,  
Or feel for a pride that is frozen in stone?

## XVI

It was but an old woman's gossiping tale,  
Brought to the Hall by a bearer of lies;  
So I drowned its remembrance in gallons of ale,—

The tavern to me was a Paradise.  
Yet long, long after it came to me,  
As I wandered lonely over the lea,  
That Ruth had departed in her despair,  
But to city or country, none knew where.  
So I sat once more in my Paradise,  
And dulled my senses in sodden vice;

Lest my soul from its wretched torpor rise,  
And I gaze in thought on those beautiful eyes.

## XVII

## 1.

Pipe, winds of England shrill,  
Strew leaves o'er mead.  
Hide winds, hide vale and hill,  
Why should I heed.

## 2.

Blow, gales of England blow,  
Strip woodlands bare.  
Bring blast, bring wintry snow,  
What should I care.

## 3.

Howl, gusts thro' niche and nook  
Your songs unkind.  
Freeze winter, lake and brook,  
Why should I mind.

## XVIII

## 1.

Shall I sit by my own hearthstone  
In the warmth of a chilly pride,  
While Ruth is away, and maybe lost,  
In the distant city's venomous host?  
Alone in the world so cold and wide,  
Alone in the world, alone!

## 2.

Shall I sit here alone, alone,  
With a heart as cold as stone?  
With a dozen servants at my behest;  
With thwarted passion my only guest;  
With patient pulse and tearless eye;  
With no gentle words to disturb my rest,  
No loved one's voice and no infant's cry,—  
Shall I sit here alone, alone?

## XIX

## I.

For the evil of life is unknown,  
Till the good once for all is revealed;  
And man who has lived thro' the years alone,  
Has a skeleton somewhere concealed.  
And a death's head grins at his hearthstone,  
And a shadow whispers, 'bone for bone.'

## 2.

So, the pleasure of life is unsweet,  
Till sorrow has sat at the board;  
And the stranger to grief is all unmeet,  
To sit and drink and pass the word,  
And bandy jests with guests who eat,  
Only to trample them under his feet.

## XX

## 1.

I waited and watched on the ringing street,  
I sought in the busy city square;  
But no fond voice my own did greet,  
No loved face lightened my deep despair.

## 2.

I searched dark alleys by day and night,  
I haunted saloons and dens of vice;  
But no news came of my lost delight,  
And less hope followed each new device.

## 3.

But at last I slept from the glaring sun,  
And wept my soul to the stars at night;  
For human strength was well nigh run,  
And the chance of finding Ruth grew slight.

## 4.

But tho' sleep may come to a man o'erworn,  
The stolen hours are for him unblest;  
For one that with vague suspense is torn,  
Will but turn and toss in a dreamful rest.

## 5.

Yet there came at last an ancient crone,  
Who led me away to a garret bare;  
And there on a pallet, but skin and bone,  
Lay lovely Ruth with her raven hair.

6.

But there sat the Spectre feared of old,  
And a grim voice whispered—"too late, too  
late!"  
And I knew by the silence cruel and cold,  
Her soul would soon pass the darksome  
gate.

## XXI

Weep not, weep not, deep, dark and liquid  
eyes,  
Dry for a space those swiftly streaming  
tears;  
Bring to remembrance dreams of happier  
years,  
And smile as doth the sun in April skies.

## XXII

1.

Yet will we rove the pleasant springtime  
woods,  
Smell the sweet violet, pluck the primrose  
pale;  
Dream where the copses burst their million  
buds  
In myriad emerald studs;  
And listen late unto the nightingale.

## 2.

Yet, yet for you the cowslip bells shall blow,  
 The frail narcissus lift its lovely head;  
 Yet, yet for you the rivulet shall flow,  
 Midst lilies all in row,  
 Making mad music o'er its pebbly bed.

## 3.

No words, no words to meet my happier mood,  
 That yet our feet may roam the fragrant  
 land;  
 Or still together seek the primrose wood,  
 Where oft of old we stood,  
 Or threaded all its mazes hand in hand.

## XXIII

I cannot think 'tis such a little while  
 In which to hope I yet may win a smile.  
 I cannot think the slowly reddening ray  
 Means more than the mere closing of the day.  
 Or that the gathering hours must bring the  
 night,—  
 Long starless gloom that leads not unto light.

## XXIV

Wan face that gazes one brief space in mine,  
 How could I sin against thy soul divine?  
 Frail form now folded fast in my embrace,



How break the clear, pure mirror of your  
face?  
Dear eyes now closed maybe in their last  
sleep,  
How cause your deep and tender wells to  
weep?

## XXV

O Ruth, my Ruth I hold thee closer yet;  
Thy loving heart unto my heart I press,  
In one sad, longing, lingering caress,  
Knowing the sun that shines too late to  
bless,  
So soon shall o'er our rapturous union set.  
Speak but a little word to cheer my soul,  
With dying lips one little sentence frame;  
That, ere the darkness o'er thy spirit roll  
Our child may know that you have blessed  
my name.  
O tremble not, for I will fold thee fast,  
And dry the tears that steal across thy face;  
Perchance in higher realms, at length, at last,  
We may forget by God's divinest grace,  
The cold, chill memories of my wicked past.  
I cannot say to her the word farewell,  
That seems to banish soul from soul, how  
long,  
And seems to me to breathe a second wrong,

And seal my misdeeds with the passing bell.  
 O sweet, wan face grown pale with loveless  
 years,

Too late, too late a loving word to tell,  
 Too late to dry those silent falling tears.  
 Speak, speak my Ruth, gaze on me just once  
 more;

O tongue past utterance, talk thro' liquid  
 eyes,

That, ere the solemn closing of the door,  
 My soul may feel new hope of Paradise.

## XXVI

Nay, touch her not, smooth not her raven  
 hair;

Close not her eyes, nor raise her stately  
 head;

Of all earth's daughters beautiful, most fair,  
 Alone I do the duties to the dead.

Step ye aside and leave me for a space,  
 Nor vex yourselves one single tear to shed;  
 Cold eyes that gazed each day upon her face,  
 Nor grief across its lineaments could trace,  
 Vain is your weeping o'er her lone death-  
 bed.

Had she a soul who lies here lifeless clay,—  
 And you could live and see her suffer so?  
 Had she a heart to cheer your darkest day,—

And only now the natural tears can flow?  
Lived she a life unsullied to all fame,—  
And your rude lips can dare to breathe her  
name?

Had you a child, or you an infant's care,  
And kept it folded warmly to your breast?  
Yet daily looked upon her dull despair,  
And heartless watched her to the last, long  
rest!

Yet such is life unto the bitter end,—  
Friendless we live, and die without a friend!

### XXVII

Break! O sad heart, if you must,  
Or live thro' dispassionate days.  
Break! or decay with the rust,  
That slowly and surely preys  
On life, until it's reduced to dust,  
That is blown by the winds a hundred ways.

### XXVIII

#### 1.

The morn broke chilly, wan and grey;  
A shadowy mist usurped the street;  
Reflected were the hurrying feet  
That took at dawn their busy way.

## 2.

An infant voice returned my own  
As back I moved into the room;  
It deepened yet dispelled the gloom,  
Tho' near me made me feel alone.

## 3.

O little eyes with wondering gaze;  
O tender feet that scarce can walk;  
O eager tongue with baby talk,  
May God protect you all your days.

## 4.

They later came with horse and hearse,  
Jet plumes to match Ruth's raven hair;  
And scarce could I in my despair,  
Refrain from words of cruel curse.

## 5.

O bitter, bitter was the sound  
Of low funereal dirges sung;  
Yet prattle from my infant's tongue  
Made the deep sorrow less profound.

## 6.

At last the babbling mourners went  
With idle chat to other spheres;  
And I was left to face the years,  
The winter of my discontent!

## 7.

Now once more 'neath my own roof-tree,  
I silent pace the polished floor;  
And listen for the moving door  
That tells of gentle company.

## 8.

For months of late have crept apace,  
And swiftly passed the perfect years;  
While little Ruth has soothed my fears,  
And given me her mother's face.

## XXIX

## 1.

I said to my soul,—  
“While the slow years roll,  
Is it well, is it well  
To dwell alone?  
To keep in the heart an empty throne;  
To take of sorrow an ample toll;  
To weep o'er the nest when the bird is  
flown;  
To make earth's heaven a second hell;  
Alone, alone, alone to dwell,  
And hugging grief by a cold hearthstone?”

## 2.

My soul gave answer—“Twere good and wise  
To watch o'er her earthly Paradise,

Who looks to thee for sunny skies.  
For there's much of loss and little of gain,  
In shedding tears that are void and vain,  
O'er the tomb of a loved one's earthly dust;  
Only to fill a live heart with pain,  
And betray o'er the dead a living trust.  
While that hearthstone is never lone,  
Where a child may prattle in tenderest tone."

**"THE HAPPY VALLEY."**

I know a valley in Ionian hills  
Where choristers for ever wake their song;  
And where the murmur of a million rills  
Makes music all day long.

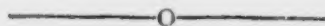
No city noise on this fair spot intrudes,  
Nor restless surging of the distant sea;  
No human voice invades these solitudes,  
Known but to God and me.

I know each green park leading to the sky,  
Each gentle slope, each waterfall I love;  
'Twere sweet to live alone, alone to die,  
Thus raised the world above.

Blithe vale, within thy heart keep endless  
Spring;  
Clear flow thy rivulets to yonder sea;  
And while thy birds in copse and covert sing,  
In dreams I'll dream of thee.

"VERSE."

She came, and thro' the woodland glades  
 The flowers looked up in joy to greet;  
 She went, and thro' the twilit shades  
 Lay withered lilies at my feet.



"VERSE."

The lily loves the valley,  
 The harebell loves the hills;  
 I love the blossom swinging,  
 The swallow heavenward winging;  
 I seek the secret alley,  
 I revel with the rills;  
 My waterfalls are singing,  
 My woodland bells are ringing;—  
 But, the lily loves the valley,  
 The harebell loves the hills.



## "TO R. M. A."

Farewell! A little space in Time  
You dwell apart from me. Adieu!  
Till later days once more renew  
Our friendship in this Western clime.

From hills 'neath snowdrift deeply laid,  
And prairies clad in virgin white,  
The sapphire sea shall greet your sight,  
And fields in emerald hues arrayed.

Then, merry be your Christmas Tide,  
Blithe season crowning the full year  
With bells, with games and right good  
cheer,  
And Yule Log from the woodlands wide.

Yet later, when the snowdrop blooms,  
And crocus gems the velvet vale;  
While braving the late Winter gale  
The larch puts forth its tender plumes,—

Mayhap once more your thoughts may turn,  
To one who lives beyond the seas;  
Who longs to smell his native breeze,  
To list the brawling of the burn.

O, sweet to be on England's shore,  
When Spring comes dancing thro' the  
woods;  
When singing birds and bursting buds  
Seem glad to see the sun once more.

---

"WINTER."

Pile logs upon the hearth lads,  
For Winter's here again;  
The snow is on the hillside,  
The frost is on the pane.  
Oh! cold is the night lads,  
And keen the wintry wind;  
So think of Yule and heap the fuel,  
And banish thoughts unkind.